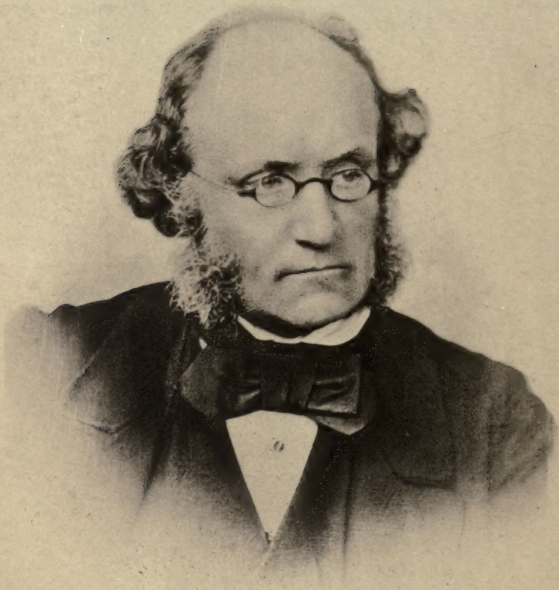
Professor Cameron

with Professor Crum Brown's

kind regards

DR. JOHN BROWN AND HIS SISTERS ISABELLA AND JANE



DR JOHN BROWN.
after a photograph by Caldesi, London. 1859.
anno Aetatis Suae 49.
Natus 22 Sept. 1810 – obiit 11th May 1882.

DR. JOHN BROWN

AND HIS SISTERS

ISABELLA

AND

JANE

By E. T. M'LAREN

SIXTH EDITION

WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

A. CRUM BROWN, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.S.

Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh

LONDON

ADAM & CHARLES BLACK

1901

Brown Alex.r Crum, M.A., M.D., Edin., D.Sc., Lond.; F.R.S.; F.R.S.E.; F.R.C.P.E.; F.C.S.; F.I.C.; LL.D. Aberdeen, Glasg., Edin., and St. Andrews; b. Edinburgh, 26.III.1838, s. of Rev. John Brown, D.D.; m. Jane Bailie (d. 1910) dau. Rev James Porter, Drumlee, Co. Down. Educ.: Royal High-School, Edin.; Mill Hill School; Universities of Edinburgh, Heidelberg, Marburg.

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Fifth Edition, enlarged, 1896

Extra-Academical Lecturer on Chemistry, Edin. 1863-69; President Chemical Society of London, 1892-3; Professor of Chemistry, Edin. Univ.y, 1869 to 1908.

Address: 8, Belgrave Crescent, Edinburgh.

Died 28th Oct. 1922. From "Who Was Who" 1920.

As will be observed I am greatly indebted to him for this book. J.H.C.

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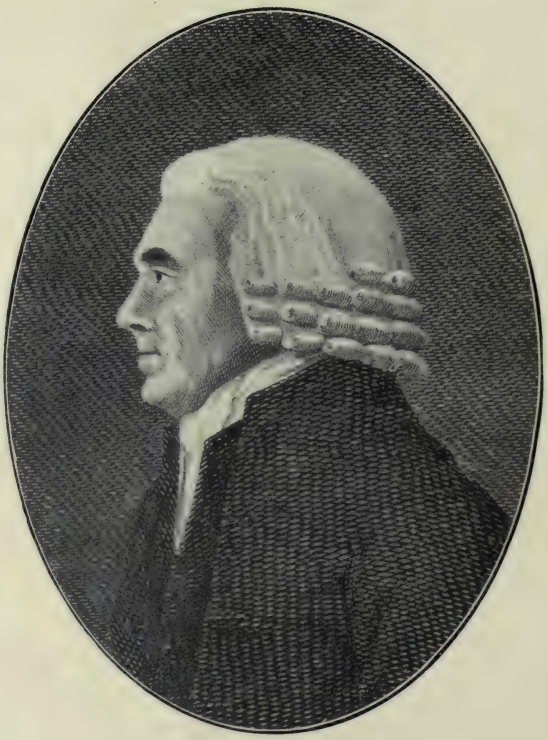


REV. JOHN BROWN OF HADDINGTON.

From an old print.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO SIXTH EDITION

It is now nineteen years since my brother Dr. John Brown died, and Miss M'Laren, on the occasion of the publication of a new edition of this book, uniform with the *Horæ Subsecivæ*, has suggested that I should prefix to it a few words which might give to those who read his writings, but did not know him, some idea of his life and of what manner of man he was. With some diffidence I have agreed to try.

My brother was the fifth John Brown in lineal descent. The first was a 'customary' weaver in the small village of Carpow near Abernethy. The second, left an orphan at the age of ten, became a herd laddie on

the Abernethy braes, learnt Latin at the parish school and taught himself Greek, and ultimately became Secession minister of Haddington and Professor of Divinity in the Secession Hall. His memory is kept fresh in many a house by his 'Self-interpreting Bible.' The third was Secession minister at Langrig near Whitburn, West Lothian, a devoted pastor and a man of pure and holy character. The fourth was Dr. John Brown, Secession minister, first at Biggar in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire and afterwards in Edinburgh. These, except the weaver, of whose personality nothing is known but that he taught his son to pray, are described in the 'Letter to Dr. Cairns.' We have still with us Dr. John Brown's son and grandson, the sixth and the seventh John Brown.

My brother was born at Biggar on the 22nd September 1810. His father was his teacher while at Biggar, but when, in 1822, the removal to Edinburgh took place he went to

JOHN BROWN OF WHITBURN.

By permission of Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier.

school. After attending some of the literary classes in the University of Edinburgh he devoted himself to the profession of Medicine. He was apprenticed to Mr. Syme, the famous surgeon, afterwards Professor of Clinical Surgery, and he often referred with pleasure to the fact that his apprentice fee purchased his master's 'first pair of wheels.' He began his practical work in the 'Edinburgh Surgical Hospital, Minto House,' and everybody knows one case which he there attended—that of Ailie Noble, recorded by him long after in the story of *Rab and his Friends.* After finishing his studies at the University he spent a year as assistant to a surgeon in Chatham, and returning to Edinburgh, graduated in 1833 and at once began practice. In 1847 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and for a considerable time acted as librarian. In 1874 the University of Edinburgh conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. He was appointed

Assessor in the University Court by Mr. Gladstone during his double term of office as Lord Rector.

In 1840 he married Catherine Scott M'Kay, who died in 1864. In 1876 he retired from practice, but many of his patients, from their great personal regard and their confidence in his skill, insisted on retaining him as medical adviser.

During his later years he was occasionally laid aside from work by illness, which undoubtedly was brought on more than once by the anxieties of practice acting on his intensely sympathetic nature. In the autumn of 1881 all his friends were delighted to see his perfect restoration to health and to his former cheerfulness. In the beginning of May 1882 he caught cold and was confined to the house with symptoms which did not at first give rise to any alarm. A slight pneumonia was detected by his life-long friend Dr. Peddie on the 8th of May. On the 10th he began to

lose strength, and sinking rapidly he died early on the morning of the 11th.

The title *Horæ Subsecivæ* very accurately describes his literary work. It was essentially the product of odd hours: he gave his strength to his professional work, and was indeed "a very skilful physician, full of that apparently intuitive knowledge which really came, as he has so well pointed out that it can only come, from constant, close, accurate observation, and from a sympathetic interest in the patient as a fellow human being rather than as a *case*. He did not despise or neglect the scientific side of medicine, though to him medicine was essentially the healing *art*." In more than one passage he states his views as to medical education, and gives advice to young medical men as to how they should train themselves so that they may best perform their sacred duties, and what he advised them to be he was.

But how can I tell what he was? How describe his simple but infinitely complex

character? If I were to attempt its analysis I should say that its fundamental principle was a perfect and loyal devotion to truth—not that coarse truth which is merely the negation of lying, but the pure, essential truth which the seeing eye can somewhat perceive as pervading all the works of God. And as love was the source and spring of all his power, so this love of truth gave him that instinctive sense of the beautiful in art and in literature, which made him so excellent a critic—clear and certain, but also kindly and considerate. If he had to review an opinion, or an essay, or a picture, he did not begin, as most of us do, with the points to which he objected. If there were anything good in it he began there: he did not spare the faults and errors, but treated them in a manner so friendly as to rob criticism of the bitterness which we are apt to think is of its essence.

There was a charm in his manner and conversation which is quite indescribable, and

there was also a singular balance in all his faculties which precluded extremes, and never suffered degeneration into corrupt forms. He had humour in a very high degree, but it never for a moment merged into buffoonery. He had sense and wisdom of a rare kind, but they never became severe or overbearing. He was full of pleasant fancy, but it never interfered with his great practical insight and skill. He held very decided views in theology, in politics, and in medicine, but he was at the same time perfectly tolerant of views opposed to his own, and ever ready to recognise the importance of diversities in human opinion. He had a remarkably clear insight into character, but though the weaknesses, follies, or vices of those with whom he came in contact seldom escaped him, he never seemed to be touched by any sourness towards his fellow-men. The only things of which he was impatient were pretentiousness, quackery, and falseness. He never showed any vanity and,

while ready to recognise good in others, was very diffident of himself, forbearing, and humble. He was a sincere and devout Christian: his religion was not a thing that could be put off or on, or be mislaid or lost, it was *in* him, and he could no more leave it behind him than he could leave his body behind. It was in him a well of living water, not for himself so much as for all around him. And his piety, truth, goodness, and Christ-like character were never more clearly seen than in those periods of darkness when they were hidden from his own sight. He very seldom spoke expressly of religion: he held 'that the greater and the better—the inner—part of a man is and should be private'; but he could not speak of anything without manifesting what manner of man he was, and his ideas on religion can be gathered, imperfectly no doubt, but so far truly, from his writings.

Most men in their intercourse with their fellows use certain current phrases, useful

counters of speech which mean something or nothing as the case may be. We keep them, so to speak, in our pocket and hand out one or two as occasion seems to require. He had none of these: his commonest remark to the porter who took his portmanteau at the station or to the cabman who drove him home —to every one, high or low, with whom he came in contact, was fresh and original, and felt like a breath of fresh air. All natural and unaffected human beings were at once at home with him, and even the most artificial prigs gradually thawed in his presence.

Congenial spirits were attracted to him by his writings, and the friendships thus formed were warm and lasting. With the certainty that I am omitting many who ought to be included, I venture to name Ruskin, Thackeray, Dean Stanley, Lady Augusta Stanley, Lady Minto, John Leech, Landseer, Dr. John Carlyle (the translator of Dante), and his more generally known brother Thomas,

Sir Henry Taylor, Max Müller, Hutton of the *Spectator*, Jowett, Lord Houghton, Sir William Stirling Maxwell.

Many of the friends so drawn to him were Americans. Indeed it is not too much to say that at one time, perhaps even still, he was better known and understood on the other side of the Atlantic than on this. Among these American friends may be mentioned Mr. Fields, Dr. Wendell Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, S. L. Clemens ('Mark Twain'), and Professor Hutton of Princeton. The friendship of these, and of many others of whom I saw little, was a great pleasure to him, and he was always glad to welcome any one who brought an introduction from an American friend. But with or without an introduction no one from any part of the world who wished to see him had any difficulty in doing so.

It is a necessary consequence of such a nature as his that his writings reflect himself in an unusually clear and perfect manner.

To them I must refer the reader if he wishes to learn something of his wisdom and humour and love. Those who knew himself will often refresh their recollection in this way, and bring back the tone of his voice and the gentle firmness of his beautiful face.

ALEX. CRUM BROWN.

August 1901.

Edinburgh.

He and his "four Sisters" have been reading this book recently.
September, 1929.

J.H.C.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THESE Sketches are written by a dear friend of ours, known to all of us from childhood as 'Cecy.' She had unusual opportunities of thoroughly knowing my brother and sister, having been with them in joy and sorrow, in health and sickness, sharing and heightening their happiness, and doing more than we can know or understand to lighten their sadness.

What she wrote has been read in manuscript by many of the intimate friends of Dr. John Brown and his sister Isabella: all have recognised the faithfulness of the portraits. I may quote from a letter written to me by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who knew my brother well, although he never saw him, and loved him as every one did who really knew him:—'I felt every word of it at my heart's root, to use Chaucer's expression. The life itself is so angelically sweet—the nature which won the love of the English and American reading world showed itself so beautifully in his daily life—that no portrait-painter who pictures life in words could ask a more captivating subject. And the writer has wrought her labour of love in a manner worthy of her subject. All is simple, natural, truthful; and the little

Memoir leaves an impression as clear and as sweet as if the loving disciple himself had written it. I mean these words to come under the eye of the writer. I trust you will see that they do.'

We know that there are very many true friends of my brother and sister who would wish to read the sketches, and to possess a copy of them, to whom, however, this is impossible while they remain in manuscript. Our friend has yielded to our wish that they should be printed, and I am sure she will have the thanks of all such.

The engraving of Symington Church and Churchyard is from a pencil-drawing made by Ewbank for my father.

ALEX. CRUM BROWN.

EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 5, 1889.

NOTE TO FIFTH EDITION

IN this edition the Author has added a third Sketch, drawn with the same loving care and strict truthfulness. I am, perhaps, not the best judge, but to me it seems a well-balanced and accurate picture of my sister's character and life.

A. C. B.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1895.

DR. JOHN BROWN

DR. JOHN BROWN IN 1866.

From a photograph taken at Ambleside.

in the Vale of the Rothay
3/4 mile from Lake Winder-
-mere, and at the foot of
Wansfell Pike.

WHEN a school-girl, I was standing one afternoon in the lobby at Arthur Lodge, talking to Jane Brown, my newest school friend. No doubt we had much that was important to say to one another, and took small notice of what doors were opened or shut, or what footsteps came near. I remember no approaching sound, when suddenly my arm was firmly grasped from behind, and 'What wretch is this?' was asked in a quiet, distinctive tone of voice.

The words were sufficiently alarming, but I had no sense of fear, for my upturned eyes looked into a face that told of gentleness as truly as of penetration and fun, and I knew as if by instinct that this was Jane's 'Brother John,' a doctor whom everybody liked. There was no 'Rab and his Friends' as yet. I must have stood quite still, looking up at him, and so making his acquaintance, for I know it was Jane who answered his question, telling him who I was and where I lived. 'Ah!' he said, 'I know her father; he is a *very* good man, a great deal better than ——, in whom he

believes.' He asked if I was going in to town, and hearing that I was, said, 'I'll drive you in.' He took no notice of me as we walked down to the small side gate, and I was plunged in thought at the idea of driving home in a doctor's carriage. We soon reached said carriage, and my foot was on the step, when again my arm was seized, and this time, 'Are you a Homœopathist?' was demanded. I stoutly answered 'Yes,' for I thought I must not sail or drive under false colours. 'Indeed! *they* go outside,' was his reply. This was too much for me; so, shaking myself free I said, 'No, they don't, they can walk.' He smiled, looked me rapidly all over from head to foot, and then said in the same quiet voice, 'For that I'll take you in'—and in I went.

He asked me a little about school, but did not talk much, and I remember with a kind of awe, that I saw him lean back and shut his eyes. I did not then know how characteristic of him at times this attitude was, but I felt relieved that no speaking was expected. He brought me home, came in and saw my mother, and before he left had established a friendly footing all round. And so began a friendship—for he allowed me to call it that—the remembrance of which is a possession for ever, κτημα ες αει.

Many years after, when one day he spoke of driving with him as if it were only a dull thing to

do, I told him that when he asked me I always came most gladly, and that I looked upon it as 'a means of grace.' He smiled, but shook his head rather sadly, and I was afraid I had ventured too far. We did not refer to it again, but weeks after he came up to me in the dining-room at Rutland Street, and, without one introductory remark, said, 'Means of grace to-morrow at half-past two.'

And means of grace it was then and always. I remember that afternoon distinctly, and could write down recollections of it. But what words can convey any idea of the sense of pleasure that intercourse with him always gave? It brought intensifying of life within and around one, and the feeling of being understood, of being over-estimated, and yet this over-estimation only led to humility and aspiration. His kindly insight seemed to fasten rather on what might yet be, than what already was, and so led one on to hope and strive. 'I'll try to be good,' must have been the unspoken resolve of many a heart, after being with him, though no one more seldom gave what is called distinctively 'good advice,' medical excepted!

It was to Colinton House he was going that afternoon. As we drove along, sometimes there were long silences, then gleams of the veriest nonsense and fun, and then perhaps some true words of far-stretching meaning. The day was one of those in

late winter that break upon us suddenly without any prelude, deluding us into believing that spring has come, cheering, but saddening too, in their passing brightness. As we neared the Pentlands he spoke of how he knew them in every aspect, and specially noticed the extreme clearness and stillness of the atmosphere, quoting those lines which he liked so much—

> 'Winter, slumbering in the open air,
> Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring,'

and ending with a sigh for 'poor Coleridge, so wonderful and so sad.' After his visit to the house he took me to the garden, where he had quiet, droll talk with the gardener, introducing me to him as the Countess of something or other. The gardener took the Countess's visit very quietly—he seemed to understand the introduction. I remember the interview ended abruptly by Dr. Brown pulling out the gardener's watch instead of his own. Looking at it, he replaced it carefully, and, without a word said, he walked away. As we were leaving the garden he stopped for a moment opposite a bed of violets, and quoted the lines—

> 'Violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes;'

then, after a minute—'What a creature he was, beyond all words!'

I think it was the same afternoon that, in driving

home, he spoke of the difficulty we had in recalling, so vividly as to hear it once more, the voice of one who is gone. He said, 'You can see the face,' and, putting out his hand, 'you can feel their touch, but to hear the voice is to me most difficult of all.' Then, after a pause, he said, 'For three months I tried to hear *her* voice, and could not; but at last it came,—one word brought it back.' He was going to say the word, and then he stopped and said, 'No, it might spoil it.' I told him I could recall very vividly the only time I spoke to Mrs. Brown. He asked me to tell him about it, and I did. The next day I met him out at dinner, and by rare good fortune sat next him. We had only been seated a minute or two when he turned to me and said, 'What you told me about her yesterday has been like a silver thread running through the day.'

At one time he drove to Colinton two or three times a week, and knew each separate tree on the road or stone in the wall, and on suddenly opening his eyes could tell within a yard or two what part of the road he had reached. For, if it were true that he often closed his eyes as if to shut out sad thoughts, or, as in listening to music, to intensify the impression, it was also true that no keener observer ever lived. Nothing escaped him, and to his sensitive nature the merest passing incident on the street became a source of joy or sorrow, while in

the same way his keen sense of humour had endless play. Once, when driving, he suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence, and looked out eagerly at the back of the carriage. 'Is it some one you know?' I asked. 'No,' he said, 'it's a dog I *don't* know.' Another day, pointing out a man who was passing, I asked him if he could tell me his name. He merely glanced at him, and then said, 'No, I never saw him before, but I can tell you what he is—a deposed Established Church minister.' Soon after I learned that this rapid diagnosis was correct.

He often used to say that he knew every one in Edinburgh except a few new-comers, and to walk along Princes Street with him was to realise that this was nearly a literal fact. How he rejoiced in the beauty of Edinburgh! 'She is a glorious creature,' he said one day, as he looked toward the Castle rock, and then along the beautiful, familiar street shining in the intense, sudden brightness that follows a heavy spring shower; 'her sole duty is to let herself be seen.' He generally drove, but when he walked it was in leisurely fashion, as if not unwilling to be arrested. To some he spoke for a moment, and, though only for a moment, he seemed to send them on their way rejoicing; to others he nodded, to some he merely gave a smile in passing, but in each case it was a distinctive recognition, and felt to be such. He did not always raise his hat,

and sometimes he did not even touch it; and when laughingly accused of this, he would say, 'My nods are on the principle that my hat is chronically lifted, at least to all women, and from that I proceed to something more friendly.'

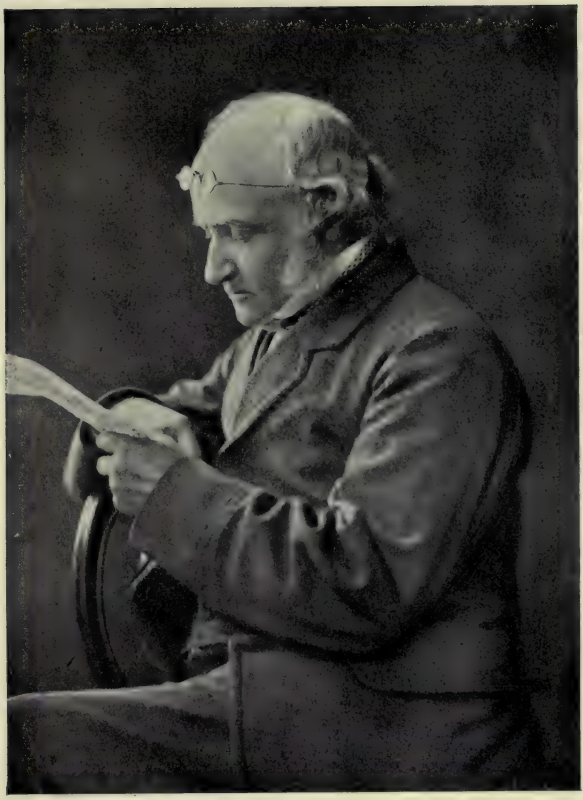
Once, on meeting a very ceremonious lady, his hat was undoubtedly raised, and, when she had passed, he said, 'I would defy any man in creation to keep his hat near his head at the approach of that Being.' He was anything but careless as to small matters of ceremony, but then with him they ceased to be mere ceremony, and represented something real. His invariable habit of going to the door with each visitor sprang from the true kindliness of his nature. Often the very spirit of exhilaration was thrown into his parting smile, or into the witty saying, shot after the retreating figure, compelling a turning round for a last look—exhilaration to his friend; but any one who knew him well felt sure that, as he gently closed the door, the smile would fade, and be succeeded by that look of meditative pensiveness, so characteristic of him when not actually speaking or listening. He often spoke of 'unexpectedness' as having a charm, and he had it himself in a very unusual degree. Anything like genuine spontaneity he hailed with all his heart. 'Drive this lady to *Muttonhole,'[1] he said to a cabman,

* He often gave this as an address, the oddity of the name having a fascination for him.

late one evening. 'Ay, Doctor, I'll dae that,' the man answered, as he vigorously closed the door and prepared to mount without waiting for further instructions, knowing well what doctor he had to deal with. 'You're a capital fellow,' Dr. Brown said; 'what's your name?' And doubtless there would be a kindly recognition of the man ever after.

In going to see him, his friends never knew what style of greeting was in store for them, for he had no formal method; each thing he said and did was an exact reflection of the moment's mood, and so was a true expression of his character. That it would be a hearty greeting, *if he were well*, they knew; for, when able for it, he did enjoy the coming and going of friends. At lunch-time he might often be met in the lobby on one of his many expeditions to the door, the ring of the coming guest suggesting to the one in possession that he, or *possibly* she, must depart; and, when encountered there, sometimes a droll introduction of the friends to one another would take place. Often he sat in the dining-room at the foot of the table with his back to the door, and resolutely kept his eyes shut until his outstretched hand was clasped.

But perhaps the time and place his friends will most naturally recall in thinking of him, is a winter afternoon, the gas lighted, the fire burning clearly, and he seated in his own chair in the drawing-room



DR. JOHN BROWN IN 1874.

From a photograph by Fergus, Largs.

Anno Ætatis Suæ 64.

(that room which was so true a reflection of his character), the evening paper in his hand, but not so deeply interested in it as not to be quite willing to lay it down. If he were reading, and you were unannounced, you had almost reached his chair before the adjustment of his spectacles allowed him to recognise who had come; and the bright look, followed by, 'It's you, is it?' was something to remember. The summary of the daily news of the town was brought to him at this hour, and the varied characters of those who brought it put him in possession of all shades of opinion, and enabled him to look at things from every point of view. If there had been a racy lecture, or one with some absurdities in it, or a good concert, a rush would be made to Rutland Street to tell Dr. Brown, and no touch of enthusiasm or humour in the narration was thrown away upon him.

One other time will be remembered. In the evening after dinner, when again seated in his own chair, he would read aloud short passages from the book he was specially interested in (and there was always one that occupied his thoughts chiefly for the time), or would listen to music, or would lead pleasant talk.[2] Or later still, when, the work of the day over, and all interruptions at an end, he went up to the smoking-room (surely he was a *very* mild smoker?), and giving himself up

entirely to the friends who happened to be with him, was—all that those who knew him best now gladly and sorrowfully remember, but can never explain,—not even to themselves.

In trying to describe any one, it is usual to speak of his manner; but that word applied to Dr. Brown seems almost unnatural, for manner is considered as a thing more or less consciously acquired, but thought of apart from the man. Now in this sense of the word he had *no* manner, for his manner was *himself*, the visible and audible expression of his whole nature. One has only to picture the ludicrousness as well as hopelessness of any imitation of it, to know that it was simply his own, and to realise this is to feel in some degree the entire truthfulness of his character: 'If, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.' Perhaps no one who enjoyed mirth so thoroughly, or was so much the cause of it in others, ever had a quieter bearing. He had naturally a low tone of voice, and he seldom raised it. He never shouted any one down, and did not fight for a place in the arena of talk, but his calm, honest tones claimed attention, and way was gladly made for him. 'He acts as a magnet in a room,' was sometimes said, and it was true; gently, but surely, he became the centre of whatever company he was in.

When one thinks of it, it was by his smile and his smile alone (sometimes a deliberate 'Capital!' was added), that he showed his relish for what was told him; and yet how unmistakable that relish was! 'I'll tell Dr. Brown,' was the thought that came first to his friends on hearing anything genuine, pathetic, or queer, and the gleam as of sunlight that shone in his eyes, and played round his sensitive mouth as he listened, acted as an inspiration, so that friends and even strangers he saw at their best, and their best was better than it would have been without him. They brought him of their treasure, figuratively and literally too, for there was not a rare engraving, a copy of an old edition, a valuable autograph, anything that any one in Edinburgh greatly prized, but sooner or later it found its way to Rutland Street, 'just that Dr. Brown might see it.' It seemed to mean more even to the owner himself when he had looked at it and enjoyed it.

He was so completely free from real egotism that in his writings he uses the pronouns 'I' and 'our' with perfect fearlessness. His sole aim is to bring himself into sympathy with his readers, and he chooses the form that will do that most directly. The most striking instance of this is in his 'Letter to Dr. Cairns.' In no other way could he so naturally have told what he wishes to tell of his father and his father's friends. In it he is not

addressing the public—a thing he never did—but writing to a friend, and in that genial atmosphere thoughts and words flow freely. He says towards the beginning, 'Sometimes I have this' (the idea of his father's life) 'so vividly in my mind, that I think I have only to sit down and write it off, and do it to the quick.' He did sit down and write it off, we know with what result.

Except when clouds darkened his spirit (which, alas! they too often did), and he looked inwards and saw no light, he seemed to have neither time nor occasion to think of himself at all. His whole nature found meat and drink in lovingly watching all mankind, men, women, and children, the lower animals too,—only he seldom spoke of them as lower, he thought of them as complete in themselves. 'Look at that creature,' he said on a bright, sunny day as a cab horse passed, prancing considerably and rearing his head; 'that 's delightful, he 's happy in the sunshine, *and wishes to be looked at;* just like some of us here on the pavement.' How many of us on the pavement find delight in the ongoings of a cab horse? His dog, seated opposite him one day in the carriage, suddenly made a bolt and disappeared at the open window. 'An acquaintance must have passed whom he wished to speak to,' was Dr. Brown's explanation of his unexpected exit.

In *The Imitation* it is said, 'If thy heart were

sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a looking-glass of life.' It was so with Dr. Brown. His quick sympathy was truly personal in each case, but it did not end there. It gladdened him to call forth the child's merry laugh, for his heart expanded with the thought that joy was world-wide; and in the same way sorrow saddened him, for it too was everywhere. He discovered with keenest insight all that lay below the surface, dwelling on the good, and bringing it to the light, while from what was bad or hopelessly foolish he simply turned aside. He had friends in all ranks of life, 'from the peasant to the peer,' as the phrase is, and higher.[3] He was constantly forming links with those whom he met, and they were links that held fast, for he never forgot any one with whom he had had real contact of spirit, and the way in which he formed this contact was perhaps the most wonderful thing about him. A word, a look, would put him in possession of all that was best and truest in a character. And it was character that he thought of; surroundings were very secondary with him. Though he thoroughly appreciated a beautiful setting, the want of it did not repel him. 'Come and see a first-rate man,' he said to me one day as he met me at the door. And here in the dining-room stood a stalwart countryman, clad in rough homespun, with a brightly-coloured 'cravat' about his neck, his face glowing

with pleasure as his friend (for he evidently considered Dr. Brown his friend) looked up at him. They had met that morning, when the man came asking admission for a child to the Infirmary, and now he had returned to report his success. The look of keen and kindly interest with which every word was listened to might well encourage him to 'go on,' as he was frequently told to do. 'The wife' figured now and again in the narration, and as he rose to go, the beaming look with which Dr. Brown said, 'And you're fond of your wife?' was met by a broad smile of satisfaction, and, 'Ay, I'm fond o' her,' followed by a hearty shake of the hand. 'His feelings are as delicate as his body is big' was Dr. Brown's remark as he returned to the room after going with him to the door.

It is Ruskin who says, 'The greatest thing a human soul ever does is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one.' Dr. Brown was constantly seeing what others did not see, and the desire to tell it, to make others share his feelings, forced him to write, or made it impossible for him to do so when not in writing mood. To prescribe a subject to him was useless, and worse. What truer or shorter explanation can be given of the fascination of 'Rab and his Friends' than that in James, in Ailie, and in Rab he 'saw something' that others

did not see, and told what he saw in 'a plain way,' —in a perfect way, too. 'Wasn't she a grand little creature?' he said about 'Marjorie,' only a few months before his death. 'And grand that you have made thousands know her, and love her, after she has been in heaven for seventy years and more,' was the answer. 'Yes, *I am glad*,' he said, and he looked it too. He was not thinking of 'Marjorie Fleming,' one of his literary productions, as it would be called, but of the bright, eager child herself.

But the words he applied to Dr. Chalmers are true as regards himself—'We cannot now go very curiously to work to scrutinise the composition of his character; we cannot take that large, free, genial nature to pieces, and weigh this and measure that, and sum up and pronounce; we are so near as yet to him and to his loss, he is too dear to us to be so handled. "His death," to use the pathetic words of Hartley Coleridge, "is a recent sorrow, his image still lives in eyes that weep for him."' Though necessarily all his life coming into close contact with sickness and death, he never became accustomed, as so many seem to do, to their sorrowfulness and mystery, and the tear and wear of spirit involved in so many of his patients being also his close personal friends, was, without doubt, a cause of real injury to his own health.

I shall never forget the expression of his face as he stood looking at his friend Sir George Harvey, for the last time. He had sat for a long while holding the nearly pulseless wrist; then he rose, and with folded hands stood looking down earnestly on the face already stamped with the nobility of death, his own nearly as pale, but wearing too the traces of care and sorrow which had now for ever vanished from his friend's. For many minutes he stood quite still as if rapt in thought; then slowly stooping, he reverently kissed the brow, and silently, without speaking one word, he left the room.

I have spoken of the first time I saw him; shall I tell of the last—of that wet, dreary Sunday, so unlike a day in spring, when, with the church bells ringing, John* took me up to his room, and left me there? He was sitting up in bed, but looked weaker than one would have expected after only two days' illness, and twice pointing to his chest, he said, 'I *know* this is something vital;' and then musingly, almost as if he were speaking of some one else, 'It 's sad, Cecy, isn't it?' But he got much brighter after a minute or two, noticed some change in my dress, approved of it, then asked if I had been to church, and, 'What was the text?'[4] smiling as he did so, as if he half expected I had forgotten it. I told him, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of

* Dr. Brown's only son.

good cheer, I have overcome the world.' 'Wonderful words,' he said, folding his hands and closing his eyes, and repeated slowly, 'Be of good cheer;' then, after a pause, 'And from *Him*, our Saviour!' In a minute or two I rose, fearing to stay too long, but he looked surprised, and asked me what I meant by going so soon. So I sat down again. He asked me what books I was reading, and I told him, and he spoke a little of them. Then suddenly, as if it had just flashed upon him, he said, 'Ah! I have done nothing to your brother's papers but look at them,[5] and felt the material was splendid, and now it is too late.' Some months before, when he was exceedingly well and cheerful, he had told me to bring him two manuscript books I had once shown him, saying, 'I have often felt I *could* write about *him*, as good a text as Arthur Hallam.' I told him it would be the greatest boon were he to do it; but he warned me not to hope too much. After a few minutes, again I rose to go. His 'Thank you for coming,' I answered by, 'Thank you for letting me come;' and then, yielding to a sudden impulse, for I seldom ventured on such ground, I added, 'And I can never half thank you for all you have been to me all these years.' 'No, you mustn't thank me,' he said sadly, and a word or two more, 'but remember me when you pray to God.' I answered more by

look and by clasp of his hand than by word; but he did feel that I had answered him, for 'That's right,' he said firmly, his face brightening, and as I reached the door, 'Come again soon.'

The next time I was in that room, four days after,* it was to look on 'that beautiful sealed face,' and to feel that the pure in heart had seen God. Sir George Harvey once said, 'I like to think what the first *glint* of heaven will be to John Brown.' He had got it now. What more can or need we say?

* 11th May 1882.

ISABELLA CRANSTON BROWN

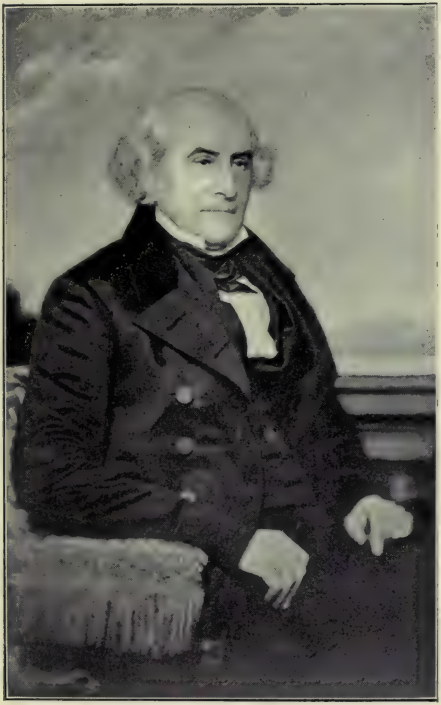
ISABELLA CRANSTON BROWN IN 1885.
From a pencil sketch.

TRY to see with the 'inward eye' a house facing south, built of fine grey stone, the good quality of which can be noticed in the pillars of a porch, too large perhaps for what it leads to, but suitable as an entrance to a house not quite of the usual type. A window above the porch, one on each side of it, and to the east an additional window in a wing, are all that is seen from the front. The ground around slopes gently, and is divided into a lawn, gravel walk, and shrubbery beyond. Wait for a minute or two, and if it is summer, and afternoon, the porch door will open, and you will see coming quickly down its steps a small, slight, middle-aged lady. She wears a black dress, or one of a very quiet colour, having no undue amplitude of skirt, and reaching only to her ankles, a dress in which utility is evidently the first consideration, but pretty too, and of fine soft material. A light shawl is round her shoulders, so small as in no way to impede the free movement of her arms; and not only *on* her head, but framing her face—a face kind, bright, sensitive—is a beautifully fresh cap formed of

rows of finely plaited tulle, with a single bow of white ribbon behind, strings of the same white ribbon being tied or fastened by a small brooch under her chin.

She will cross the gravel walk, and reach the lawn with accelerated velocity; then suddenly pause, stoop, and with a small tool which she holds in her hand will vigorously unearth any dandelion plant that dares to flaunt on that green-sward. Possibly while she is at her work the gate bell is rung, and she leaves the dandelions as abruptly as she came to them, and, after a warm welcome to her guest, returns with him or her to the house.

The newly-arrived may be of any age or rank, or either sex, but the greeting is equally genuine. If it be some old divine, or young student, or well-known civic dignitary—'You have come to see my father,' she says, and leads the way to the eastern room, the library, which commands a lovely view of the surrounding country. Here is seated, or presently enters, a tall, benignant-looking old man. His eyes are pensive, luminous, and kindling, and though his forehead is bald, his hair perhaps first attracts attention. It is long, but not straggling, ending in a natural roll, and white as snow, while his eyelashes and delicately arched eyebrows are jet black. Any one who reads this probably knows the house and its inmates. It is Arthur Lodge, Newington; the beautiful old man is Dr. Brown of 'Broughton



JOHN BROWN, D.D.

From a photograph by Moffat, Edinburgh.

Place'—his name a household word in Edinburgh forty years ago—and the small, slight, middle-aged lady is his daughter Isabella.

Isabella Cranston Brown was born at Biggar on the 31st of October 1812. She was named after her paternal grandmother, who died when her father was not quite twelve years old, but of whom in old family papers interesting traces remain. Her signature, shaky and feeble, is seen at the foot of 'a covenant,' signed only a few days before her death by herself and her husband, John Brown of Whitburn, in which they 'give up ourselves, soul and body, and our children, to God, for time and eternity, to be directed, managed, and saved by Him.' Also in a rough little paper book, and in a boyish hand, evidently copied by her son soon after her death, are records such as the following: 'The Lord enabled me, when about six or seven years of age, to take much delight in repeating psalms and hymns, and to be given to secret prayer.' And, 'I remember that another girl and I, in our early youth, used to pray and converse together in a wood near Kelso.' She is said to have been very beautiful, and her son was strikingly like her. Touching reference is made to her by Dr. John Brown in his 'Letter to Dr. Cairns.' No wonder the Isabella Brown of whom we now speak was glad to bear the name of one so lovely and so good.

Our Isabella was scarcely four years old when her own mother died, but she was love-loyal to her all through a long life. She dwelt on the thought of her in a way that was quite remarkable. She could vividly recall being told of her death. 'I was at Callands,' I have heard her say, 'and Aunt Aitken took me on her knee and told me God had taken my mother home.' 'I know I remember this,' she would eagerly tell us, 'for I always, in thinking of it, pictured it as happening in a room seldom used as a sitting-room, and I asked Aunt long after and found I was right; so you see I remembered it,' she would say almost with triumph. And again—'Another thing I verified as to my remembrance of my mother. She took medicine out of a strangely-shaped bottle, and of a bright colour. I once spoke to John about it, and he knew what it must have been, and thought she was very likely to have got it.' No one could hear her speak of her mother without feeling that it was beautiful and wonderful to see the eagerness in her old face when referring to the young mother whom she had so early lost. Those who can recall this feature in her character feel that the desire, often expressed, and distinctly stated in her will, 'I wish to be buried in the same grave as my mother,' was not mere sentiment, as some might call it, but the expression in symbol of one of her deepest feelings. She had a daughter's heart. Dr. John Brown

tells, in speaking of his early life, how their mother's death affected their father in many ways, and that although he was much with his children, giving them 'all the education they got at Biggar,' he was more silent and reserved than he had been before. He says, 'We lived, and slept, and played under the shadow of that death, and we saw, or rather felt, that he was another father than before.'

And yet their childhood must have had its happy days too, if we may judge by the pleasure with which they looked back to their home in that quiet pastoral country. And the sunny Saturdays spent among the hills must have been a very distinctive part of their education. On one of them Dr. John found out the mystery of the well, 'far up among the wild hills,' caught its 'soul,' on 'one supremely scorching summer day, when the sun was at his highest noon.' Even then they felt the fascination which continued with them through life, of 'the sleep which is among the lonely hills,' and listened to the stillness, profound, but for the murmur and tinkle of the burn, or perhaps the sudden passing of a big, satisfied bee, whose hum breaks and yet completes the silence.

They had occasions, too, when their best dresses were needed, for Isabella used to describe the glories of 'white muslin frocks, with neat little frills and blue sashes,' which she and Janet rejoiced in, and in

which 'Janet at least looked very pretty.' But I think the time she most distinctly remembered wearing hers was not at 'a dancing ball' (I quote a well-known divine), but at the family dinner at Callands, after the baptism of her cousin and lifelong friend, Andrew Aitken.

I have seen letters of Dr. John's to her when she was quite young, in which playful reference is made to her habit of repeating poetry, and she is advised to commit to memory, 'Now came still evening on.' One suspects that she *had* committed it to memory, and that perhaps her brothers had heard it oftener than they desired. Then when she is paying a short visit to friends, she is adjured to come home at once, and addressed as 'Queen of this our dwelling-place.' But in early letters the light in which she is most frequently seen is acting as softening medium between her brothers and grandmother, their mother's mother, who took charge of them during their childhood and youth. Statements of accounts (and very innocent statements they seem) are made to her.[6] Dr. John seems very early to have felt 'Grandmother's Rhadamanthine' rule, as he calls it. And perhaps Isabella felt it too; but loyalty to 'Grandmother' was very deep in her nature, and the almost exaggerated idea which she had of upholding her authority made it more difficult for her, as a young girl, to show the sympathy with her brothers which

she truly felt. In later life the expression of this sympathy had no hindrance.

During the few happy years of her father's second marriage, to wait on her grandmother, whose strength was beginning to fail, became her first duty. When her brother William began practice in Melrose, she and her grandmother went to live with him. It was very remarkable how all her life long, when one work was taken from her, or completed, another was given, and this took place very markedly now.

As her grandmother's life drew rapidly to a close, it became only too evident that her father would again be left a mourner. His wife lay hopelessly ill in her mother's house at Thornliebank, and Isabella had letters from him urging her to come. Doubtless the dying mother wished with her own lips to commend her little children to their elder sister's care. But her grandmother she could not leave.

When the end at last came, and she was needed no more, without an hour's delay she set off. It was a 'Sabbath' morning (she never called it Sunday), and she was in time to catch the coach to Edinburgh. I have heard her describe in her graphic way how she reached Edinburgh when the church bells were ringing, and how strange and far off they sounded to her, so bent on continuing her journey on this the first and only time in her life when she wished to travel on that day. But there was

no coach to Glasgow, or she was too late for it. There were no telegrams then, and she could do nothing but wait till the Monday morning. When she reached Thornliebank, all was over. To care for her father and his three little children was now to be the work of her life, and with all her heart she accepted it. She did a mother's part, and she had her reward. More and more as she grew older, Jane* and Alexander,† and all that concerned them and theirs, became the centre of her interest, though the circumference was wide enough; and after her death, in the box which held her few, very few, valuables, were found some of the toy treasures of the 'little Maggie,' so early taken, but never forgotten. Through all the long years of her life, it was with the tremulousness of voice that tells of a lasting grief that she named her.

Some years after she had begun to take the management of her father's household a serious illness laid her aside, and made the discharge of home duties impossible. But shortly after coming to Arthur Lodge her health was completely restored, and continued unbrokenly good till within a year of her death. Now that I think of it, she can scarcely have been even middle-aged when Arthur Lodge became her home, and I made the acquaintance of the

* Wife of Rev. Dr. J. Stewart Wilson of New Abbey.

† Professor A. Crum Brown, Edinburgh.

family; but our ideas of age get only very gradually adjusted, and to a school-girl she looked old.

Indeed I cannot recall distinctly the first time that I saw her, but I can the first time I saw her father. I was in the dining-room alone, waiting, I suppose, for Jane, but I can have offered no explanation of my presence, for after a minute or two he laid his hand on my shoulder, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' I remember the sudden 'irradiation of his smile' when I told him, and then his emphatic 'You will always be welcome here.' Surely I must have felt as if quite unexpectedly I had got a certificate from one of the patriarchs, or rather that my father had. 'Jane, these are very nice people, *so like ourselves*,' was Isabella's remark on becoming acquainted with our family,—a verdict that in after years we often referred to, laughed over, and rejoiced in.

My earliest recollections of her are in connection with Friday evenings, when, there being no lessons to learn, it was allowable to ask school-friends to tea, and I was often invited. It was genuine tea in those days, a real meal, over which a blessing was asked, and to which a procession was made (for it was served in the dining-room) headed by Dr. Brown. A memorable face and figure his was! He was 'a preacher of righteousness,' and well and faithfully he did his work; but his expression, his whole bearing, without one spoken word, proclaimed the reality of a spiritual

world. 'For they that say' (or look) 'such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.' Sometimes it was Mrs. Young, his eldest daughter, whom he led in, whose face had a beauty radiant of the spirit like his own, and to whom in bright, early days surely Wordsworth's lines might have been applied :—

> 'And she hath smiles, . . .
> That spread and sink and rise,
> That come and go with endless play,
> And ever as they pass away
> Are hidden in her eyes.'

At other times it was Miss Mayne ('cousin Susan'), with whom he crossed the hall—the hall had something impressive about it, the doors of all the principal rooms were made of oak—and the way in which he led her from the library, and seated her at the table, struck me even in those heedless days. He had a look all the time as if he were taking care of her, and as if his thoughts were concentrated on so doing. Perhaps Miss Mayne's deafness increased this effect, for speaking to her was well-nigh impossible. Indeed speaking was not a strong point at meals at Arthur Lodge. What was done in that direction on those Friday evenings was led by Isabella, who from her seat at the head of the table dispensed hospitality by word and glance, nodding kindly looks of inquiry as to viands, and giving a swift, running commentary on things in general to her young sister and brother and their friends.

Perhaps young people nowadays might think such occasions rather slow, but I know I was always glad to be there. 'Plain living and high thinking,'—but indeed the living seemed to me anything but plain: all manner of bread and scones, jelly of the clearest, and cream that quite reluctantly left the quaint little cream-jug—I can see it now.

When one looks back, now that the sum of her days is told, one can see what true, lasting work she did in all the relationships that most closely touched her heart. It was as daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, friend, that her life was passed, and a full, happy, if at times careworn, life she often felt it to have been. It has been said that she had 'a genius for friendship,' and indeed she had. She had friends among 'all sorts and conditions of men,' women, and children. Certainly children were not passed over by her: her rapid glance, when it lighted on them, paused, and ended in a smile and nod. If her smile was responded to, ever so slightly, she felt as Mr. Erskine of Linlathen did when he 'used to fix a child's eye by a look of kindness—That child's spirit and mine have communion.' But though she might begin with the children, she did not end there; the young mother would be sympathised with, or the old man whose days were nearly ended. Always, and everywhere, intercourse with those about her was turned into a real lasting bond. I know nothing

as to her 'calls,' as offers of marriage were designated by the maiden aunt of her friend, Dr. William Robertson of Irvine, but I do not think there ever had been one that she found it difficult to set aside. 'Calls' can sometimes, not always, be averted, and she may have addicted herself to this in early days, or perhaps her entire absorption in home-life formed a kind of hedge around her. At any rate, she found it difficult to picture to herself a love strong enough to compete with that which drew her to her father, and made her happy in ministering to him. Perhaps this may account for the strange anomaly in her loving, sympathetic nature, that a friend's becoming 'engaged' seemed to discompose her, and it was some time before she could quite adjust herself to the new position. She seemed scarcely to understand or relish the immense leap which had been taken, by which One distanced all others, and friends, however dear, were left far in the background. But the initial stage over, then she righted herself, and a new home was a new centre for love and interest.

In thinking of how her life was spent, one can see how emphatically she belonged to what must now be called 'the old school.' Thoroughly educated she certainly was, and her vigorous intellect took and kept hold of what it received. She had the power of assimilating knowledge and making it her

own, while her imagination was easily aroused, and her perceptions were quick and sensitive. One who knew her well writes: 'It was very striking to us, who saw her only now and then, to find her always stored with what was best and freshest, and ready to describe and convey it in her own keen, quick way. Perhaps our rare visits tended to our thus receiving this very vivid impression — going away with the sense, as it were, of having had a fresh charge of electricity.' But of the 'higher education of women,' as it is now understood, she had none. For a long time she looked upon Girton almost with dread; but as one by one girls whom she knew and loved went there, her interest became excited, and she began to see 'some good in it,' though to the end she raised a note of caution. The same process took place in her mind as regarded women becoming doctors. At first there was a horror almost too deep for words; then when one whom she loved, and whose *mother* she had loved in youthful days, joined the ranks, she saw in *that* case some ameliorating circumstances, and the cases gradually multiplied. But as regarded herself, there was no trace of her ever having felt the need of a 'sphere.' Indeed, she used thankfully to tell that work clear and definite had been given her. The outline was given, and she did the filling-in herself. She found ways of 'ministering,' and her heart was satis-

fied. She did not in the least resent Milton's words—

'He for God only, she for God in him;'

only in her case 'him' was first father, then brother, or nephew.

In regard to her father, that she was able to be with him and to nurse him during his long, weary illness, was to her a source of deepest thankfulness. How good it was that she never knew that her very eagerness to serve him sometimes made her overshoot the mark, so defeating its end! I have heard her tell of going into his bedroom to give him food for which she thought he had waited too long. Forward she went to the window and pulled up the blind, so rapidly that the spring gave way and it rattled down again. 'Not so much birr, my dear,' her father said, and it did not seem to strike her that in those quiet words there was much repression of feeling. But reading her character so truly, and knowing the deep well of love in her heart, he bore in silence her occasional impetuosity.

Her absences from Arthur Lodge during the course of the day were frequent—for she had 'to go to the Youngs,' 'to see Miss Mayne,' to do various kindnesses in opposite quarters of the town, every day of her life,—but they were never prolonged. She often seemed to hurry home as if in some anxiety lest the house had taken fire; and her

sudden appearance on the scene, breathless with expectation, when nothing unusual had happened, was apt to have a somewhat disquieting effect.

Surely it is not treason to the memory of a friend, whose character one wholly reveres and loves, to dwell for one moment on qualities, virtues perhaps carried to excess, which had however their drawbacks. Hers was not a soothing presence. She was too nimble in mind and body for that, and her tendency to be in motion, to swoop down upon a thing, whether door or window, or figuratively on some question of Church or State, was at times a trial both to father and brother. But when Rutland Street became her home, how nobly she set herself to do her work there, showing a wisdom and adaptability for which her previous life had given small preparation! And if Dr. John's sensitive, highly-strung nature had something to bear by coming into daily, hourly contact with hers, as sensitive as, but in a different way from his own, she too had her burden. But bear it she did, asked and received strength, and was richly rewarded. Those last sixteen years of her brother's life, when she took the complete guidance of his household, and guided it well, brought her deep happiness, if anxiety too. She won for herself a distinct place in the wide circle of his friends, and it was amusing to watch how gradually her individuality came to be recognised by some who at first nearly ignored her.

The brother and sister had many interests in common. Her relish for all that was best in literature was almost as strong and appreciative as his own, and her sense of the ludicrous as keen, though not so completely under control. Any one who had the good or bad fortune to rouse to the full her risible faculty was reminded of Wendell Holmes's 'Height of the Ridiculous,' and half inclined to agree with him in resolving never again to be 'as funny as I can.'

But above all, she and Dr. John were like one another in the intense interest they felt in their fellow-creatures. They might have been—without any trouble to themselves, and had their characters been quite different from what they were!—the veriest gossips that ever lived. Their memories were perfect. Any one who has listened to the tracing of intricate relationship that would follow the casual mention of a name will realise this. Their powers of observation were keen enough to be almost like an additional sense. They had mental photographs innumerable of people with whom their connection was very slight. Dangerous gifts these might have been in some hands, but with them charity so ruled in their hearts, that it took away all possibility of anything but good and pleasure to themselves and to others arising from the exercise of their marvellous powers. Dr. John would come in at lunch-time, and mention having seen, probably from

his carriage window, some 'old wizened face' that had haunted him with memories of the past. It would be all blank at first, but light would dawn; then a flash, he had got it. Isabella would next join in, and the old wizened face turned into one of the large family of rosy children, 'all baptized by my father in Broughton Place,' and the worth of the father and mother of the large family would be dwelt on—an atmosphere of poetry, and of pity, being cast over all. If it was difficult even for them to say anything very good of some one whose name was mentioned, then there was a shake of the head, a sigh, and silence. Wordsworth announces, in rather lofty fashion—

> 'I am not one who oft or much delight
> To season my fireside with personal talk.'

Well, they *did* so season their fireside, and delighted their friends thereby, yet none of the evils which the poet feared came of it. Their interest in 'Una,' and 'the gentle lady married to the Moor,' did not suffer, and neither 'rancour' nor 'malignant truth' was ever spoken by them. They cared only for things 'honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report;' they thought on these things, and told them.

And they were true disciples of Wordsworth himself. Her copy of his poems (which by her written desire is now mine) was given her by Dr. John more

than fifty years ago. It is carefully marked, and the marks show that she had discovered for herself the pure gold, long before Matthew Arnold or any other critic had come to assist in the search. Perhaps it was partly her admiration of Wordsworth that made the Lake District to her almost enchanted ground. But this arose chiefly, I think, from its being the one lovely region beyond Scotland that she had ever visited. In these days of constant travelling to the ends of the earth, it is difficult to believe that she only once crossed the border of her native land, and that the Lake country was the limit of her journeying. She used to say that she had planned to enter London for the first time in a post-chaise, on her wedding trip! but, that trip never taking place, London she never saw. Her one grand tour then was Westmoreland, but how much wealth it brought her!

Her two brothers, John and William, and a companion of theirs, were with her. *They* walked, and she rode on a pony, lent her by a friend, the daughter of Dr. Thomson of Penrith, who died early, but whom she always remembered with true affection. The weather was perfect.

> 'The gleam, the shadow, and the peace profound,'

and all the loveliness sank into her heart, and dwelt there for evermore. When I went to the

Lake District, though it must have been forty years after her visit, she wrote to me describing with perfect correctness every turn of the road, the position of the wooded crag, the little wayside inn, as if she had been there the week before. In later years the Lake country gained for her a fresh interest as the chosen home of Mr. Ruskin, and also of his friend Miss Susan Beever, with whom for years she kept up a close, lively correspondence. Miss Beever was one of the many unseen friends to whom she wrote, with all the freedom and reality of genuine friendship.

During her visits to New Abbey, her greatest pleasure, outside the Manse, was to look at the view across the Solway. Indeed she scarcely cared to walk on any road from which she could not get 'a sight of the hills.' We did not need to ask what hills. During her last visit there, spring though it was, one day broke wild and stormy, heavy snow showers falling at intervals all morning. Towards evening the wind lulled, and though the sky was still dark and cloudy overhead, on the Solway there was a silvery light. The whole range was clearly seen, white from base to summit, and behind it a sky of quiet, tender blue, telling of a calm region beyond. Looking up from her book she noticed the change of light, and immediately rose from her seat by the fire. She looked out of the window for a moment,

and then quickly left the room. I knew where she had gone, and so followed her, to the attic (Charlie's* room), from which the best view of the mountains can be had. We stood quite still for a minute or two, then she listened eagerly when I repeated the lines—

> 'Far out of sight, while sorrow still enfolds us,
> Lies the fair country where our hearts abide,
> And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us,
> Than these few words, "I shall be satisfied."'
>
> 'Shall they be satisfied, the soul's vague longing?—
> The aching void that nothing earthly fills?
> Oh, what desires upon my heart are thronging,
> As I look upward to the heavenly hills!'

Her face told what the sight was to her; memory and anticipation both were there. Then with a look round Charlie's little room, and a sigh that he was so far away from it, she returned to the drawing-room to bury herself once more in her book.

Perhaps it was because of her increasing deafness and her decreasing strength, which made her constant running about on errands of kindness an impossibility, that reading became more and more her occupation and delight. The avidity with which she read genuine biography was only another phase of her hunger to share in the lives of others, not only in those of the men and women who were passing through this glad and sorrowful world along with her,

* Charles Stewart Wilson, Indian Civil Service.

but those who had done with all, and had reached the shore. But whatever she read needed to have the ring of reality about it. Oddness, remoteness from 'people of our own kind,' as she sometimes called it, she *could* stand, but flat, dreary conventionality wearied her at once. 'No, that won't do,' was her verdict after a quarter of an hour of the *Life of Miss Agnes Strickland*: 'Far too genteel society for me.' A certain degree of excellence had to be reached before she continued to read any book herself, and a still higher before she lent or gave it to a friend.

Her instinct for giving or lending books that were suited to each particular friend showed her keen discernment of character. Indeed, often her most direct way of showing that she understood the circumstances and tastes of any one with whom she was brought into contact, was by giving, in the form of a book, mental food that refreshed and strengthened—'the finest of the wheat.'

The number of letters she wrote was quite wonderful. Some of her correspondents she had never seen, others she had perhaps only met once or twice, but under circumstances that drew forth her sympathy, and the link held fast for life. Then, besides her purely personal correspondence, she kept all the members of the wide family circle *en rapport* with one another. One belonging to that circle writes: 'What

I, who lived at a distance from her, shall most miss, now that she is gone, are the letters of peculiar understanding and deep sympathy which used to come in times of trouble, or it might be of rarer joy, the few strong words which were always harmonious, high, and strengthening to faith, as well as those letters which spoke of her own sorrows, and naturally and confidently claimed the sympathy and participation in them which her own deep heart was so ready to give to others.' Endless forwarding of family letters took place, but always with a purpose, and that purpose a high one—to deepen love and goodwill. How one recalls the quick opening of her desk, and hears the swift movement of her pen over the paper, which begins almost before she has taken time to sit down! Sometimes she merely stood while she dashed off a kindly note of inquiry, or addressed a newspaper or magazine, containing some marked paragraph that would bring interest and cheer to an absent friend. If she enclosed in a letter—and she sometimes did—a printed hymn or 'leaflet,' one might feel sure it was not only good in a religious sense, but in a literary one too. With the practice of merely enclosing a scrap of print, with nothing in it specially appropriate to the receiver, or specially good in the thing itself, she had no sympathy. I remember going in one day when she had just got a letter with a leaflet enclosed. She had read it, and looked

troubled. 'What can I do with it?' she said. 'It is well meant;' but with a most expressive look and shrug, 'I don't like it.' 'Reverently burn it,' I said, and suited the action to the word. She looked first horrified, then greatly relieved.

Especially for her younger friends she took the greatest pains in the selection of the books she gave. Had she not believed it a very direct manner of influencing for good, she would not have allowed herself to spend so much money in this one way as she did. The proportion between her book-seller's and dressmaker's accounts must have been exactly the opposite of what is usual. 'A grand thing has happened,' was her greeting one morning, as she held up a note, which told that twelve copies of *The Story of Ida* were on their way to her. Her face beamed with pleasure, and she said in her most earnest tones, 'Now, the distribution of these will need the most careful and prayerful consideration; they must go to two classes of young girls — those who are sure to like it, and those whom I would like to like it.' The publication of that book was an event to her, securing for her as it did the friendship of 'Francesca.' Though they never saw one another in the flesh, their spirits met, and recognition will be easy hereafter.

But books were not the only gifts she gave. She had quite an elaborate system, by which the skill of

one friend could be made to minister to the needs of another, she being the medium of bringing them together. The reading of the announcement of some birth in the *Scotsman* would lead to the exclamation, 'There's an occasion for one of Cousin Janet's very best and most beautifully knitted pair of boots, or jacket,' and away she would go, and the order would be given. The number of small stockings she herself knitted and gave away must have been enormous. Nieces and nephews came first in the administration, and, as years went on, their children were supplied. Then came a large outer circle, composed of all manner of people, including tramway-car conductors, the children of the gardener, and so on, and so on, to whom cuffs and mittens and stockings were given. In later years her knitting always lay near her chair or couch, and was taken up as a rest after a long time of reading—or rather, I think, she closed the book at some passage which she had greatly enjoyed, that her mind might dwell upon it. The familiar work occupied her fingers only, and her thoughts could roam at will.

And now almost without knowing it, we have come to think of her as an old lady—yes, quite old. Dr. John died in May 1882, and she and his son remained in Rutland Street till the following May. There was rest to her in the thought that her dearly loved brother had entered into peace, and that she had still some

one to care for. She liked better to call 7 Morning side Place 'my nephew's house,' than to speak of it as her own. When he invited friends, she was most anxious that all should go smoothly. Seated at the head of the table, wearing her invariable black silk dress, and most spotless cap and shawl, with a slight flush of pink in her cheeks, and light in her eyes, she looked as pretty a picture of an old lady as one could see.

There was much about the little house and its surroundings that she greatly liked. The garden was a constant source of pleasure to her. She gave nosegays to all her friends, she again waged warfare against the dandelions, and carried it on as victoriously as she had done thirty years before at Arthur Lodge. Then of the 'view of the Pentlands' she never tired. She delighted to point out to her numerous friends that she had a different view from dining-room and drawing-room, and her little couch placed across the dining-room windows was an ideal seat for her. From it, when she looked up from book or work, she could not only see the hills, but friends at the gate, or nearer still passing the windows, for the gate-bell she never heard. When this welcome sight greeted her, down went the book or knitting, and she was at the door in a twinkling. She never lost the swiftness of movement so characteristic of her. Her mind had

all its old spring, and her body was so light that it seemed easily to obey the commands of her spirit.

Many of her friends are now glad to have copies of the portrait which my sister was able to make,* as she half sat, half lay on the said little couch. We have pleasant recollections of those morning sittings, for I had my share in the work too. She needed to be read or talked to, and on congenial subjects, for, had she wearied, no true likeness of her could have been secured.† But the sittings were short, as our house was so near, and running out and in was so much our habit.

This leads me to mention that being 'only three doors from the M'L——s' she considered one of the amenities of her new home. It was truly a very great pleasure to us. We ministered to one another, as she often said, 'in things spiritual and carnal.' Almost every morning before ten o'clock she appeared at our gate, and fortunately her key opened it, so in she came, without let or hindrance, to tell of the letters she had got, and very often to read them. This was only the first intercourse of the day, for many were our errands to and fro. Once in going with her from our house to hers, I told

* This was in 1885.

† A reference to Froude's *Life of Carlyle* called forth an expression so little to be desired that the artist issued the peremptory order (unheard by her sitter), 'Shunt from that *at once*.'

her that a neighbour, seeing our many traffickings, had asked 'if we had known Miss Brown before she came to Morningside, or only since.' She gave me one of her most expressive looks, as if words failed her. 'She must indeed believe in mushroom friendships,' she at last said. 'No'—then she clasped my arm still more firmly—'our friendship is the result of long years of joy and sorrow shared.' I said I dimly knew how much I owed her. She spoke of a 'debt' too; and then in most emphatic tones, 'But it is an account we neither of us ever wish to close.'

Living so near, I was able to see far more of her than would have been possible had we lived farther apart, and could arrange to do things for her, or go with her, as seemed best. One appointment I remember very distinctly. Mr. Gladstone was in town, and to my suggestion that there would be a crowd, and perhaps she had better stay at home, she had but one decided answer—'I mean to see him.' So I came at the hour appointed. In reply to my 'Are you ready?' she answered almost severely, as if she detected a tinge of levity in my tone (but she was wrong), 'Yes, I 'm ready, and my very finest, whitest handkerchief is ready too, to be waved in his honour.' And waved it was.

But any sketch of her life at Morningside Place would be incomplete without a reference to her Sundays there. 'I never weary of my Sabbath read-

ing,' she used to say. 'I have, to begin with, Herbert, Vinet, Erskine, and your brother-in-law' (Dr. M'Laren of Manchester), 'and what more can mortal want?' Some mortals would wish much more—or different. It was a pleasure to her to be one of the original members of the Braid United Presbyterian Church, and in every way she showed her sympathy with its work. She was faithful to the church of her fathers always, though she strongly disapproved of the Synod's petitioning for Disestablishment, or indeed for anything else. On one occasion she vigorously shook hands with a true, out-and-out voluntary when he said, 'If the State as a State has nothing to do with the Church, the Church as a Church has nothing to do with the State.' 'Let them act as citizens,' she said, 'as strenuously as they like, and let the true, spiritual idea of a Church, such as Vinet had, become a reality, and Disestablishment will come in God's own good time.'

I remember, one lovely spring morning, going with her to church. She enjoyed the view of the Braid Hills as we walked towards them, and not less did she enjoy the endless greetings that were exchanged by the way. Almost every one seemed to know her, and even after she was seated in her pew, two little girls in front, who were eagerly watching, had to be presented with 'a wee packet of sweeties each,' which they quite understood were *not* to be consumed on

the premises. This presentation did not take place every Sunday, for she discovered that an old man, who sat near her and them, wished to give sweeties too, so alternate Sundays were arranged, and kept to. She could hear but little of the sermon, though, that she might hear as much as possible, she finally sat in the elders' seat, a welcome guest, having ascertained that if she sat 'well into the corner,' she was not much seen. But whether she heard much or not, she liked to worship with others. A visit from some of the Youngs* and from Alexander completed the pleasures of the day,—most of all she looked forward to Alexander's visit, and he scarcely ever failed her.

After she came to Morningside Place, she still was able for, and looked forward eagerly to, her annual visit to New Abbey, and to almost the very last she went to Crofthead, a place that had for her early and cherished associations, and to Busby too, but it was very apparent that her strength was lessening. Although she began each morning with the old enthusiasm, her daily round became more and more contracted: the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. She never gave up going to 'Aunt Smith's.'† Her ties were now so much with those younger than

* Children of her elder sister.

† Sister of her father, and widow of the Rev. Dr. Smith, who succeeded Dr. Brown as minister in Biggar.

herself, that to have her father's sister still with her, who had known and loved her when she was a girl, was to her a true joy. But more and more she was content that friends and relatives should come to see *her*, and they did come. 'I seldom go to Belgrave Crescent now,' she would say, 'for Jane' (Mrs. Crum Brown) 'is so good in coming to see me,' and her expeditions by car, which used to be so frequent, were now the exception, not the rule. Though there was rest to her in the thought that 'John,' 'Janet,' and 'William' had all gone

'Into the world of light,'

(and very often she quoted those lines in speaking of them), yet

'I alone sit lingering here'

was deeply felt by her too. The books she read did not mean so much to her, when they were not to be passed on to them. Reading with their eyes, or ears, had for long, almost without her knowing it, been the habit of her mind, and though she still read, and lent books too, there was a flatness over it all.

I remember on going in one morning, three or four weeks before any signs of illness were visible, that I was conscious that there was a want of the usual spring to meet me. She had her desk on the table, and newspaper wrappers were on it, addressed to Ella Young, Nimmo Brown, and Charlie Wilson.

I offered to post them, but she said, 'Oh no, I have to get the *Weekly Scotsman* to put in them yet, and I am going for them myself. I can do so little now, I have to magnify the few offices that remain.' I had an undefined feeling of disquietude, but it passed, as she became brighter, and interested in what I told her.

But soon after, the shadow fell, the shadow that was never lightened here. And yet that last year may not have been so sad to her as to her friends. Not three months before the end, when I was sitting with her in the sunshine, she suddenly looked up and said in an awestruck voice, 'I never go to church now;' and then, almost with a bright look, 'Well, I'm not quite sure, I *think* I was there this morning;' then, after a pause, 'But I don't know what is dream and what is reality.' She knows now.

One of the last times I saw her I like specially to recall. It was the true farewell. Though quite unable to speak, paralysis having gradually done its dire work, she evidently recognised those about her. Her eyes, clear and blue, followed Agnes Young lovingly as she moved through the room, brought her flowers to look at, and gave her some food, which she seemed to relish when given by her much-loved niece. Then she turned and looked at me, as if she wished to include us both in her

earnest gaze. We stood close together, and, after a minute or two, I repeated the last verse of the 23d Psalm. As long as I live I shall be glad to recall her look of deep response, as very slowly I said the last two lines—

> 'And in God's house for evermore
> My dwelling-place shall be.'

Then remembering how she loved to be loved, and how many there were who longed, but would never be able, to bid her a loving farewell, I said earnestly, 'And none of us will ever forget you.' Again the look of truest feeling, and a gentle dropping of the eyelids, the only sign of response she could give, a kiss—and interchange of thought and feeling with her, which had long been one of the pleasures of my life, was ended.

Not long after,* her spirit reached the land which had sometimes seemed to her 'very far off.' It is not difficult to think of her in a spiritual world. All that she cared for here could very easily be transferred—

> 'The streams on earth I've tasted
> More deep I'll drink above.'

We can believe that the wishes expressed in lines (Whittier's) which she often tremulously quoted, were fulfilled to her—

* November 6th, 1888.

SYMINGTON CHURCHYARD.

From pencil sketch by Ewbank.

'Suffice it if, my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace,
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place:

Some humble door amid Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade, where sin and striving cease,
And flows for ever, through heaven's green expansions,
The river of Thy peace.

There from the music round about me stealing
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find *at last* beneath Thy tree of healing
The life for which I long.'

Her body lies, as she wished, in the quiet little churchyard at Symington, in that grave the closing of which is so vividly described by Dr. John.[7] The funeral was watched with interest by many. The church-bell was tolled in token of respect, and one can picture how there would spread over the district a wave of recollection of the family whose connection with the place was fast becoming a tradition of the past. And nothing would have pleased her more than that, as a consequence of her death, her father's name should again be heard in Biggar by the children and children's children, of those whom in the early years of his lifelong ministry he had so faithfully taught.

JANE EWING WILSON

JANE EWING WILSON.

From a photograph by Fairweather, St. Andrews.

IN the first lines of this little book, mention is made of 'Jane Brown, my newest school friend, and the time referred to is the year 1850. She was my oldest and dearest friend when, on the 6th December 1894, she died.

I would fain write a few words about her here, so as to associate her name with the brother's and sister's whom she so dearly loved; and it seems natural to do so, for it was only through her gentle but firm persistence that these 'Outlines' were ever given to the public.

From the time when we first learned as children to love one another, there was not only no break in our friendship, but no interruption to our happy intercourse; and, looking back on the long stretch of years, I can remember on her part no unworthy action, no word that was not kind and truthful.

Her home was a very quiet one. Her mother died when she was only five years old, and her father spent much of his time in his study. Her sister naturally made all arrangements suit his mode of life, and the early hours which he wished his household to keep interfered greatly with social gatherings.

But Jane and her brother Alexander (Professor Crum Brown) made no attempt to rebel; and wherever they might be, and whatever fun they might have to leave, off they set, in order to be present at 'family worship' at half-past nine. They did not look upon themselves as martyrs either; it was a thing settled once for all, and they accepted of no condolence.

At school she was most eager over her lessons. We knew that she liked play and nonsense; but we also knew—those of us who were somewhat light-minded—that no attempt to get her to play first and work afterwards would be successful. It had always to be abandoned as fruitless labour.

At one time she was placed in a French class too advanced for her; but instead of getting this remedied by striking work and being removed to a lower, she strove hard to keep up with the girls older than herself, and came almost every evening to our house to get the help of one of my elder sisters in the preparation of her lessons. The whole evening perhaps was not given to lessons, and at last her father noticed her frequent and long absences, and inquired where she had been. On hearing, he (half playfully) reminded her of Solomon's advice as to withdrawing 'thy foot from thy neighbour's house,' but she did not withdraw, and no evil effects followed.

Though her life at home was very quiet, she paid frequent visits to her relatives, the Crums of Thornlie-

bank and Busby, and she always came back from these with ideas enlarged in many directions. As she grew older, 'going to Rutland Street' (Dr. John Brown's house), and all which that phrase implied to her, became more and more an intellectual stimulus and delight. She was so much younger than her elder brothers and sisters—their father was a widower for nearly twenty years—that during her girlhood very much of the spirit of reverence characterised her intercourse with them. The reverence never faded, but gradually she gained a place of equal companionship, and one sign of the change was the dropping of the rather cumbrous terms 'brother' and 'sister,' which she had been taught to prefix to their names.

From very early days she and her brother Alexander had learned to love good reading, and had discovered for themselves bits of Thackeray and Ruskin that afterwards became classical. She could repeat *Ballads of Policeman X.* long before their authorship was known, their weekly appearance in *Punch* being eagerly looked for. *Modern Painters*, too, was to her a mine of wealth. Indeed, no words can exaggerate the effect which Ruskin's writings had on her whole character. I wonder if the girls of twelve or thirteen nowadays study his, or any other author's works, in as devout a spirit as she did. I remember that she once confided to me as a secret,

the belief that *nothing more* was needed to make life happy than to be able to draw in a manner which Ruskin would approve. She changed her mind afterwards—that was later.

In what she read she was very much guided by her father and her brother, Dr. John. Her father had a wholesome dread of scrappy reading. One Sunday evening he said to her, 'My dear, I would rather see you reading a *book* than a periodical.' *Good Words* had come into existence about that time, and I think that she was reading it. What would he have thought of the flood of periodical literature that has overwhelmed us since! Milman's *Church History* and some of Milton's prose works I know that she read at her father's instigation. She was too faithful a disciple of Dr. John to care much for Dickens. I was always conscious of a certain chill when reference was made to any of his famous characters. But Sir Walter Scott and Thackeray she knew thoroughly. No restrictions were put upon her as to the reading of fiction, but it was only the very best that she cared for. The ordinary three-volumed novel she simply could not read. She did not need to be advised not to do so; for her it had no attraction.

On looking back over all these old times, I feel how pure her motives were, how entirely free she was from self-seeking. She delighted in seeing the

celebrated people whom she met with at Rutland Street, but no thought as to whether they would ever notice her crossed her mind. On one occasion she had sat beside Thackeray for a little while, and *could* have spoken to him, but she could think of no remarks to make except, 'It's a very windy day' and she preferred silence to saying *that.*

She had a very correct, retentive ear, and songs that she heard she was able to remember, and write down their notes. She thus filled book after book of MS. music. She always liked to share her good things; and after an evening at Rutland Street, when perhaps she had heard Mrs. Lushington sing one of her brother's (Tennyson's) songs, she would make an early rush to our house the next morning to let us hear it. So eager was she on one occasion, that down she sat on the very first chair she came to, just within the dining-room door, and began what sounded to us a weird, unearthly wail. When she stopped, she found we were less impressed than she expected, and one of us made what evidently she considered a very frivolous joke. To this day I can remember her disappointed look, and how, almost with tears in her eyes, she said, 'I wonder I come to tell you things, you so often jeer.' But we did not always jeer, and happily for us she never ceased to come.

The publication of *Horæ Subsecivæ* was, of course,

to her an event of the deepest interest. She brought me an early copy, and while writing my name in it, as much as signified that if I did not appreciate this book she must give me up. She mentioned that there was one of the papers I must be sure to read, 'Rab and his Friends.'

One day she and I sat for a long time in Dr. John's carriage, waiting for him to come out of Edmonston and Douglas's shop. At last he came, proofs in his hand. He was absorbed in them for some time; then, looking up, he said, 'I am going to ask your advice.' He then asked us if one of Marjorie Fleming's very strong expressions should be retained, or' (suiting the action to the word) 'shall I draw my pencil through it?' We voted for its remaining, and after a minute's pause he said, 'Then it stays,' and his pencil was returned to his pocket.

There was no Girton or Newnham in those days, but she kept up habits of study long after she left school, and was as eager over our readings in German, as she had been when marks and prizes were involved. In the years that intervened between the close of her school life and her marriage she had no distinct work. To have a 'definite line' was not so sought for then as now, but she was unselfish and helpful always. At home, in her brothers' houses at Rutland Street and at Melrose, she was usefully employed, and idle never.

She had a piano that she dearly loved, and she considered it a duty and a delight to practise both playing and singing regularly every day. In this way she laid the foundation of what afterwards became such a source of pleasure to her friends—her endless knowledge of music, good, quaint, funny, pathetic—a pleasure which she never wearied of giving, nor they of receiving.

About the year 1862 I noticed that the name of 'Mr. Wilson, a friend of Alexander's, a student of the Church of Scotland,' now and then crept into her talk, and at times in an evening I saw Mr. Wilson at Arthur Lodge. One evening I saw them talking together, and then I *knew*. Soon after, when I had stayed longer in the country than she expected, I was told on my return that 'Miss Jane Brown had called three times.' I thought I knew the tidings she had to tell—she was engaged. It came as a surprise to many of her friends. One did not naturally associate her family with the Church of Scotland; and her sister Isabella became pale when, with bated breath, she referred to 'my father's life-work in connection with the Voluntary Controversy.' But even she soon mastered her fears, or forgot them, and neither at first, nor afterwards, did Jane herself feel any hesitation as to becoming a member of the Church of Scotland. Indeed, we sometimes thought that she almost too easily adjusted herself

to her new position. It was a little difficult for her friends who did not belong to the 'national Zion' to remember that when she used the words, '*We* do so-and-so,' 'we' had no reference to the United Presbyterian Church, the Church of her fathers. But good, and good only, came to her and to her friends from her hearty adoption of the Church in which she now found a home.

In the summer of 1863 she was staying with us in London, when she heard from Mr. Wilson that he was elected minister of the Parish of New Abbey. Before she had ever seen the place she seemed to know that she would love it. She was told that a beautiful avenue of lime-trees led into the bending, picturesque village street, and that at the end of this street was the fine old ruin, Sweetheart Abbey, affording endless scope for sketching, and beyond it, the manse.

To her it seemed an ideal home, a place to live and to die in, and her ideal was fulfilled.

On the 24th November 1863 she was married to the Rev. James Stewart Wilson. The ceremony was performed by her uncle, Dr. Smith of Biggar. Now began for her a life so varied in its usefulness, and in its pleasures too, as well as in its anxieties and cares, that I feel it very difficult to give even a shadowy picture of it. From the very first day she identified herself absolutely with her husband's work

Indeed, she did not think of it specially as his. It was '*our* parish, *our* church, *our* library, *our* hall.' Sometimes she stumbled into saying, '*We* have to preach,' but she caught herself up then: she drew the line *there*. I have heard her say, 'I think I could preach one, or perhaps two, *very* good sermons, but neither of them would last more than three minutes.' Perhaps this was true. She had no power of amplifying her ideas; and from long habit, early acquired, because for her she thought it safest, all the emotional in her character was kept under strict reserve. She served God day by day in deed more than in word. No doubt, she prayed earnestly and simply every day of her life, 'Thy kingdom come,' and set about trying to bring it, by doing the duty that lay nearest, by resolutely turning away from everything tinged with selfishness or meanness, and by caring with all her heart for 'things lovely and of good report.'

She did all this, but she very rarely spoke of it. In naming this, I do not mean to infer that she should be imitated, or to cast any slight on those who do differently—'one after this manner, another after that.' But this silence as regarded her deepest feelings was so characteristic of her that mention of it could not be omitted.

This reticence applied to her letters too, in some measure. They gave facts, without very much of a commentary. We sometimes spoke of this, and

called it 'the polar-bear style,' which made her laugh, but she knew right well that no friend of hers ever for one instant doubted the warmth of her heart, the entire and lasting soundness of her affection.

Sometimes dwellers in towns have an idea that those who live in the country have little to do. That depends upon the people. To live even for a few days at the manse at New Abbey was to feel how full this life may be, though in the midst of quiet surroundings. The hospitality that her husband and she showed to all who came to the little village, either with introductions or without them, must have made housekeeping alone not quite a sinecure. But housekeeping never bulked large in her view, or rather, she had the power of wise administration. Her servants were shown that she trusted them to do their duty, and they were loyal to the trust. In the same way, during the years that her five children were being educated at home, their governess for the time being seemed to find her right place in the household, and duties beyond the family were still undertaken. Her children had a first place in her heart and mind, but not in the actual amount of time spent on them each day while in the nursery and schoolroom. The work she did for her husband made that an impossibility. In all his projects for the good of his people (and they were many) she

took her full share. Her power of drawing came into exercise. During their tours on the Continent she took rapid little sketches; and when, on the dark winter nights, Dr. Wilson gave lectures in the village hall about the places they had visited, from these sketches she made pictures, swiftly done with large brushes, and producing quite grand scenic effects—whether after the Ruskin manner or not. Then what care she took of the village library! At one time she discovered the books had got damp, and needed overhauling, so she set herself to the work of cleaning, covering, mending, and of making a new catalogue. For some reason it had to be done early in the morning, and for about a fortnight she rose between five and six, while it was still dark as midnight, got to the place by help of a lamp, and set to her work, each book passing through her hands. She owned it felt somewhat 'eerie,' but what did that matter? 'The thing had to be done.'

Her own class in the Sunday School gave her great pleasure, and many were the kind nods and words bestowed on her own special children in her swift goings and comings through the village. Her *Catechism for Young Children* has had a wide circulation and has supplied a felt want. A plan, too, all her own, difficult to describe, but which occupied many happy evening hours, was that of selecting and copying out verses of Scripture, or hymns

suitable for the children in the Infant class. And then when, at the end of the year, she summed up on a large card, beautifully printed and decorated by her own hand, the whole work of the twelve months, and got it enclosed in an envelope, on which the name of each child was inscribed, her happiness and triumph were a sight to see and remember. It is pleasant to know that these cards, carefully preserved in their original covers, are lovingly treasured by many who are no longer children, but who take them out fondly and handle them tenderly, thinking kindly the while of 'Mrs. Wilson of the Manse.'

The first occasion on which the Sunday School had a summer treat, she went to Dumfries, the day before, to get flags for the procession, and came back triumphant, having secured the services of a fiddler as well, whose conduct, however, the next day did not turn out so satisfactory as could have been wished. On 'Jubilee Day,' 1887, the entertainment given by Captain and Mrs. Stewart of Shambellie was to herself a great delight. She wrote, 'I shall never forget it.' She engaged heartily, too, with Mrs. Stewart as an Associate of the Scottish Girls' Friendly Society, and very real lasting work was done in that direction.

When to all these services for the general good we add her endless visits of inquiry, of sympathy, of

condolence, and her kindly runnings in 'just to ask for you,' we can feel how constant was her ministering to others. An Englishman who for some time kept the keys of the Abbey, and had opportunity of watching her movements during the day, is reported to have said, 'There goes Mrs. Wilson; she goes h'out and she goes h'in, and she never does no 'arm.' He might have expressed himself more positively.

But all these occupations did not smother her deep, early acquired interest in literature and art, and her neighbours in the county could safely look for direction from the Manse as to 'things to read,' new and old.

In all the many improvements of the surroundings of Sweetheart Abbey, under whose shadow she lived, she took the deepest interest, and most of all in the pulling down of the old ugly church, a structure which disfigured the Abbey, and the building of the present one, an event which helped to bring about many improvements in the mode of worship that she had longed for.

I have spoken only of her work outside her own home, but how can I tell of all that she was to those within its walls? 'The heart of her husband did safely trust in her,' but of that we cannot speak; and to each of her children, her only son and four daughters, she was the never-failing counsellor and

friend. How good it is to remember that she lived long enough to welcome home from India her son 'Charlie,' his wife and child, and to rejoice in his appointment to the honourable post he had quickly won, that of Postmaster-General of Bengal. In her eldest daughter's work at Blantyre, Central Africa, as wife of the late Rev. Dr. William Affleck Scott, she took the deepest interest, and she was spared the knowledge of the sorrow that was so soon to darken that young life. She had deep satisfaction, too, in the successful career of her second daughter as student at Girton, and as House Mistress at the celebrated School of St. Leonards, in St. Andrews.

Though there were depths of earnestness in her character, there was a sunny ripple of laughter on the surface which diffused a constant brightness through the household. It seemed almost unkind, after a day of constant occupation, to ask her to sit down to the piano to play and sing. But it never occurred to her to excuse herself, and she enjoyed it too. Sometimes, towards the close of the evening, she would show some signs of fatigue, and make a rapid bolt from the drawing-room for a glass of water, but she seemed to think some apology was needed even for that amount of self-indulgence! One evening she would devote herself entirely to Scottish songs, the next to English, German, and so on. There seemed no end to her

list. One might hear her play right on, evening after evening for a fortnight, and never have one song repeated. Whatever she might play or sing was good of its kind; she tolerated nothing flimsy, and took great pains to find the best editions (which were generally the oldest) of familiar airs, and she re-discovered some that were in danger of being forgotten. How completely she made her own whatever she sang! Can any of her friends ever hear, 'Oh! can you sew cushions?' or 'As I gaed by mysel' to Goudiston Fair,' or 'I wish I were where Gadie rins,' or many another song, without almost hearing her voice and seeing her?

As she grew older, she became more like her father. Her eyes had a gentler, less lustrous look than his, but she had the same arched eyebrows, the same calm, intellectual forehead. She was so constantly busy that one seldom saw her sitting quite outwardly unoccupied, except in church. When at rare moments she did allow herself to rest, as she leant back in her low chair, she slightly crossed her arms, and one could sometimes see a gentle movement of her fingers, the outward sign of the tune that all unconsciously was running in her head. She was not thinking of the tune, but she could name it if asked. Her whole look told that 'beauty born of' high indwelling thought all her life long had 'passed into her face.'

When the gift of an organ was made to the

church by an old parishioner, she at once constituted herself organist; nothing else was ever thought of, and never was she absent from her post. It was wonderful and beautiful to see the pains she took to have appropriate music. Perhaps no one beyond her own family knew how much thought she gave to the subject, and that the great events in the 'Christian Year,' Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, were kept in remembrance in the music chosen. It gladdened her to think that she was contributing her part to the song of praise ascending all over the world. Sometimes, too, she expressed her own feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving in the music played before and after service.

In such gratitude and thanksgiving her life-work was ended. The 24th November of last year (1894) fell on a Saturday. It was the thirty-first anniversary of her marriage-day. On the Sunday, at the close of the morning service, she played the triumphant 'Hallelujah Chorus.' As she carefully closed the organ (her weekly habit for years), she turned to her husband, who alone remained in the church, and said, 'That was our thanksgiving for thirty-one years of happy married life.' And so ended *her* ministry there: she never entered the church again.

The next Wednesday a sudden chill seized her, which proved to be the beginning of influenza. There was anxiety from the first; for though

invariably healthy, doctors had said she had very little 'recuperative power.' Still hope was gaining ground as the days passed on; but on the afternoon of Wednesday, 5th December, it was seen that she was sinking fast, and early on the morning of the 6th, she passed peacefully away. There were no good-byes; she never knew that she was going. One of the villagers who dearly loved her, and who showed true appreciation of her character, said, in speaking of her afterwards, 'She said naething at the end, but she was speakin' for God a' her life by what she did, and *the hale countryside kens it.*' On the funeral day there was a large gathering at the service in the church, and at its end, the whole congregation, men and women, sorrowfully followed to the churchyard.

A well-spent life? Yes. 'Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.' To leave behind not one bitter or harsh memory; to have used intellectual gifts, far above the average, after the most unobtrusive and yet eminently useful fashion; to have spent a lifetime so that, for one generation at least, 'a whole countryside' will revere her name, is surely not to have lived in vain. To those who loved her, the village street, 'Craigie-side,' 'the Barr Hill,' the whole neighbourhood is hallowed ground. They know that for thirty-one years she trod those paths, her whole soul delighting

in the beauty of God's earth, and her heart filled with kindly, helpful thoughts for those among whom she dwelt. She followed very literally in the steps of her Master, who 'went about doing good'; and we cannot doubt that her life-work has been accepted by Him who has said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'

NEW ABBEY

APPENDIX

1.

Note to p. 9.

Davidson's Mains, a village near Edinburgh, but its name of Muttonhole is classical. It is referred to in a note in Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*: 'Lauriston, the ancient seat of the Laws, so famous in French history, is very near Edinburgh, and was in their possession at the time of the Revolution. . . A brother of the Marquis of Lauriston was styled *Le Chevalier de Mutton Hole*, this being the name of a village on the Scotch property.'

2.

Note to p. 11.

In letters he often refers to books new and old. 'I am reading, or rather browsing as the cattle down in the haugh, on all sorts of herbage, a bite here and a bite there. I finished (in tears !) *Guy Mannering* last night; it is perfect, in nature, in humour, in pathos. What a dreary book Lord Amberley's must be ! — a man shutting his eyes, or rather deliberately putting them out, and then howling that he cannot see, *and that nobody else can.* I'll send you Mr. Erskine's *Letters.* There are wonderful flowings out of refreshing heavenly joy and peace, the very dew of holiness.'

3.

Note to p. 15.

Once I saw him going down his own door-steps leading a lady to her carriage, but he stopped for a moment to give his left hand, the right not being free, to a very poor woman who

was making for the door. She stood on the mat till the carriage drove off, then her turn came, and with a look of cordial welcome he went with her to the study. A few hours after his death, as I stood at the door, a poorly dressed widow passed and looked at the house with interest. When she noticed the blinds were drawn she stopped and said anxiously, 'Is onything wrang wi' the Doctor?' I told her as gently as I could. Tears sprang into her eyes and she turned away. I asked her if she would like me to give her name as inquiring. 'No, no,' she said, 'my name is naething to ony o' them now, but *he* kent me—ay, he *never* passed me.'

4.

Note to p. 18.

Dr. Brown remembered the sermons he heard, and sometimes in letters referred to them in characteristic fashion. 'We had a manly sermon on Sabbath from ——, evangelical rump-steak.' 'I had a delightful Sunday—a strong, old-fashioned Baptist sermon, in a little church in the wood; the text, "What is that to thee? *Follow thou Me*"; only he roared and vociferated—it was like the sharp shattering discharge of a Calvinistic mitrailleuse in your face.'

'Our minister was on "The Prodigal Son"; who can say more than, or as much as, the simple Divine words? What a Father!'

5.

Note to p. 19.

Taken away in early manhood, he was deeply mourned; and a sister may be forgiven if she adds in a note words which Dr. Brown wrote after reading some of her brother's papers: 'He has humour of the best, with at times a fine subdued irony, and a real *style*, which you know Buffon says "is the man," and is the hole at which genius likes to peep out with

his gleaming een. If he had not been one of the best of merchants, he would—certainly might—have been one of the best of writers, for he has both "the vision" and "the faculty," the thought and feeling, and the † curious felicity of words which makes thought at once new and true, and crystallises it, making the whole his own, and nobody else's.'

6.

Note to p. 28.

In one of his letters to her he says, 'I shall give you a full account of my outlays, my extravagance, and my wardrobe.' Here follows a long list in which there are such items as 'A pair of spurs 10s., quite necessary, but perhaps I might have got a cheaper and not so good a pair. Leeches for a poor miserable child 3s. Gloves—here I am sure you will be angry. I had two good pairs with me, and I have bought one pair 3s. 6d., another 4s. 6d., another 3s. 6d., another 3s. Of this I am quite ashamed. I seem to carry about with me an unaccountable carelessness of these things.' Finally there comes, 'To Mr. H.—£1, 1s. You of course ask who is Mr. H., and how came I to give him £1, 1s.? He is a first-rate classic, and teaches (or rather taught) privately; I went to him and had a two-hours' lesson, which was to be given once a week. Being determined to be very generous and very gentlemanly, I paid him at once £1, 1s. I have never had another lesson. He was shortly cast into prison for unavoidable debt, and wrote to me promising *if possible* to return me the money *when* he was liberated from Maidstone Jail! This letter is written in 1832, the year of the cholera, and dated from Chatham, where he spent some time as assistant doctor. He did good, brave work then, knowing no fear when duty called him. Long years after, Charles Dickens, when in Edinburgh, spoke at a private dinner-party of the shameful cowardice displayed by many during the cholera epidemic, and in contrast, told of the courage of a young Scottish doctor at Chatham, describing, among other incidents, how he stayed with a poor woman

whom all had deserted, ministered to her to the end, and then, overcome with fatigue, fell asleep, and had to be waked when at last some one ventured to open the door. 'That was Dr. John Brown,' one of the party exclaimed. Dr. Brown himself was present.

7.

Note to p. 55.

In 'Letter to Dr. Cairns,' Dr. John gives his recollections of his mother's funeral. He was five years old at the time of his mother's death.

'We got to the churchyard and stood round the open grave. My dear old grandfather was asked by my father to pray; he did. . . . Then, to my surprise and alarm, the coffin, resting on its bearers, was placed over that dark hole, and I watched with curious eye the unrolling of those neat black bunches of cords which I have often enough seen since. My father took the one at the head, and also another, much smaller, springing from the same point as his, which he had caused to be put there, and unrolling it, put it into my hand. I twisted it firmly round my fingers, and awaited the result; the burial-men with their real ropes lowered the coffin, and when it rested at the bottom—it was too far down for me to see—my father first and abruptly let his cord drop, followed by the rest. This was too much. I now saw what was meant, and held on and fixed my fist and feet, and I believe my father had some difficulty in forcing open my small fingers; he let the little black cord drop, and I remember, in my misery and despair, seeing its open end disappearing in the gloom.'—*Rab and his Friends, and other Papers*, Edition 1882, page 8.

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C/R
O/S

Maclaren, Elizabeth T.

Dr. John Brown and his sisters Isabella and Jane